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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2009

In Today's Papers

Erdogan Meets with DTP Leader Ahmet Turk
All papers and TV channels: Prime Minister Erdogan received DTP leader Ahmet Turk yesterday at the parliament as a first step in the Kurdish initiative, reports Hurriyet. Following the one-hour meeting PM Erdogan announced to the press, "The meeting inspired great hopes for the future. We are happy and hopeful." Mainstream Vatan headline reads "Hope Inspiring Remarks" and reports that the two decided that further talks between the two parties will be carried out by Interior Minister Atalay, who would keep in touch with DTP officials. Vatan notes Erdogan told press after the meeting, "Our mothers do not want to shed more tears. They want the bloodshed and killings to end." Ahmet Turk said they were pleased that dialogue was established between the two political parties, adds Vatan. Reactions to the meeting of the two leaders came from the opposition parties. Vatan reports that main opposition party CHP leader Baykal said "The PKK is the counterpart of this meeting", and MHP leader Bahceli said "I am sure we will hear the details of the meeting from '12 bad men' soon, referring to 12 journalists who expressed their support for the government's initiative at a meeting at the Ankara police academy last week.

Domestic Reactions to Erdogan-Turk Meeting
Media outlets report the main opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal slammed Prime Minister Erdogan for meeting with the pro-Kurdish DTP leader Ahmet Turk. "Conditions have forced the PM to come together with the DTP leader," said Baykal, adding, "This meeting clearly addressed the PKK." Opposition MHP leader Devlet Bahceli has also denounced the meeting, saying Erdogan's aim had been acquiring information about the "roadmap" prepared by the PKK's imprisoned leader Abdullah Ocalan.

Meanwhile, Islamist-oriented Zaman reports Ankara has begun work to bring back home the 'Turkish citizens' from the Makhmur Refugee Camp in northern Iraq. The Turkish Interior Ministry has sent to the camp a team to assess camp residents' expectations. Since 1993, 11,000 people have been living in the camp. Ankara will issue ID cards for the children and other camp dwellers who don't have legal Turkish identification documents, according to Zaman. Leftist Taraf claims Ankara has also asked Damascus to make preparations and allow

for the return of 2,000 PKK militants of Syrian origin to their homes.

Editorials on the Meeting Between PM Erdogan and DTP Leader Turk

Mehmet Yilmaz wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "The meeting is important, but concrete results won't come about due to the government's evasive attitude. There is a critical turning point ahead of us, and PM Erdogan must make a clear decision about whether to act with courage to resolve the Kurdish issue or to be listed as another leader who talked the talk but did not walk the walk."

Yasin Dogan wrote in Islamist oriented Yeni Safak: "Prime Minister Erdogan has demonstrated leadership in this very difficult process. The efforts to address the Kurdish issue have been going on for a year and these efforts are now moving forward with political determination. This success requires everyone's cooperation."

Gungor Mengi wrote in mainstream Vatan: "Efforts to address the long-standing Kurdish issue are good developments, but government has to be very careful in keeping a balanced approach regarding the sensitivities of the Kurds and the Turks. There seems to be no concrete strategy so far. In any case the current attitude deserves to be given a chance for success. Meanwhile, main opposition CHP's attitude is equally important in the process. CHP leader Baykal was very right to ask for details regarding the government's intentions, however he does not have any right to equate a political party (DTP) with a terrorist organization (PKK)."

Oktaay Esi wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "It looks like the process

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has started, but the government should be careful not to burn any bridges with the CHP and the MHP."

Putin Coming to Turkey for 'Signature of the Century' (Sabah)
Media outlets report that Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin is coming to Turkey today to sign 15 agreements on "strategic energy projects." Sabah says that "giant energy projects" such as Samsun-Ceyhan pipeline, Blue Stream-II and the construction of a nuclear power plant will be discussed during the meeting between Putin and Prime Minister Erdogan. Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports that among the agreements would be a cooperation agreement on the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, the agreements on early warning for nuclear accidents as well as information exchange on nuclear facilities. Sabah, Radikal, and Cumhuriyet also note that Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi is also expected to come to Ankara today for the signing ceremony. Papers comment Russia expects Turkey to also agree to the South Stream pipeline project implemented by Russia and Italy, and Turkey is expected to give official permission for the sea ecological research work along the gas pipeline route. Mainstream Hurriyet says Russia wants Turkey to join the South Stream Project for the shipment of Russian natural gas via the Black Sea and Bulgaria to Austria and Italy.

New Parliament Speaker is Mehmet Ali Sahin

All papers: The AKP's candidate, former justice minister Mehmet Ali Sahin, was elected the new parliament speaker with 338 votes in the third round of voting on Wednesday. Sahin delivered a speech and said that he would be impartial during his office. Sahin is the 24th speaker of the parliament and will assume duties officially on August 9, notes mainstream Milliyet.

The West Boycotts Ahmedinejad's Inauguration by not Congratulating Him

Media outlets report that Iranian leader Ahmadinejad was sworn in for his second presidential term on Wednesday amid protests in the streets. Hurriyet notes that the opposition parliamentarians, who claimed massive fraud in the June 12 elections, did not attend the swearing-in ceremony. Hundreds of protesters chanted "Death to the dictator" outside the parliament, and they later beaten by riot police. 10 of the protesters were detained. Milliyet reports that Iranian state TV channel Press TV announced yesterday that "The U.S. and the major Western countries joined Germany in refusing to congratulate President Ahmadinejad." In his inaugural address, Ahmadinejad stressed that some Western countries did not

congratulate him on his election win and added that he "doesn't need anyone's congratulations." Islamist-oriented Zaman headlines, "A Congratulations Gamble to The West at the Swearing-In Ceremony," and the article also notes Ahmadinejad said "I don't need anyone's congratulations." Hurriyet notes that the U.S. backed off by saying, "Ahmadinejad is the elected leader of Iran and the U.S. is ready for negotiations with him."

Survey: 51 Percent of Turks Support ICC Arrest Warrant for Sudan's al-Bashir

Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports World Public Opinion, an international public opinion survey network, conducted an international poll regarding views on Sudan's President Omer al-Bashir and the Darfur problem. In Turkey, 51 percent of those polled "approved of the ICC's arrest warrant for al-Bashir," while only 22 percent opposed it. In addition, 42 percent of Turks said they do not trust al-Bashir at all, while a mere nine percent said they trust or "partly trust" the Sudanese president.

"The Return of Bill Clinton: He Went There and Set Them Free" (Hurriyet)

Major media outlets continue to highlight the release of two American journalists jailed in North Korea after former U.S. president Bill Clinton's visit. Mainstream Hurriyet says "The event marks the return of a powerful Bill Clinton." Hurriyet also notes that Secretary Clinton decided to send her husband to talk with North Korean leader instead of Al Gore "Despite the fact that this

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decision overshadowed her Africa trip." Liberal Radikal takes a different angle by noting, "Bill Clinton's visit has been planned for the last four months. The North Korean dictator first arrested the journalists and then invited President Clinton to visit the country." Radikal also says, "Dictator Kim had to make this happen anyway because he was really cornered by the international community and their sanctions."

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- A court in Istanbul approved the third indictment about 52 suspects under the 'Ergenekon' lawsuit, of which the first hearing will take place on September 7. Suspects including retired general Tuncer Kilinc, former chairman of Higher Education Board (YOK) Kemal Guruz and former police chief Ibrahim Sahin are charged with crimes that include "forming an armed terrorist organization" and "overthrowing the government."

- Dogan Holding Group of Companies kicked off talks with Austria's OMW for the sale of its 54.17-percent share in fuel oil retailer Petrol Ofisi.

- Artuklu University in Mardin is preparing to file a request to open a Kurdish language department. If the Higher Education Board (YOK) approves it, five academics from the universities in northern Iraq will be transferred to Turkey.

- Some businessmen and shop owners in Istanbul campaign to make the government ease smoking restrictions in restaurants and bars.

World

- The U.S. said two nuclear-powered Russian attack submarines have been patrolling in international waters off the Eastern Seaboard of the U.S. in a mission tracked by Washington.

- On Thursday, the Iraqi Islamic Party leader Osama Tikrit and the former Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari will visit Ankara to be received by President Gul.

- NATO Secretary-General Andres Fogh Rasmussen will visit Turkey at the end of August.

- The Turkish Cypriot Tourism and Travel Agencies Association (KITSAB) is considering launching legal proceedings against Greek

Cyprus for what it sees as harassment of their business partners
abroad.
JEFFREY